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**The French Polemic: Nationalism, Racism and Atlanticism  
in the  
Past, Present and Future**

by

Nannette Sherry Roberts  
Lieutenant, United States Navy  
B.A., University of Arizona, 1986

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
II.	FRENCH NATIONALISM AND THE CONCEPT OF THE NATION.....	7
	A. THE NATION AND CITIZENSHIP.....	12
	B. THE MYTH OF THE NATION.....	15
	C. AMBIVALENCE OF THE MASSES.....	18
	D. THE CONCEPT OF THE FOREIGNER.....	21
	1. Anti-Semitism.....	22
	2. French Domination.....	24
	3. The French Equation.....	27
	4. The Second Generation.....	29
III.	NATIONALISM, XENOPHOBIA & RACISM IN THE PAST AND PRESENT.....	35
	A. THE PAST.....	37
	1. L'Action Francaise.....	39
	B. THE PRESENT.....	43
	1. Le Front National.....	44
	2. Societal Agitations.....	50
	3. Public Opinion Polls.....	52
IV.	NATIONALISM AND IMMIGRATION.....	55
	A. THE FRENCH MODEL OF INTEGRATION.....	56
	B. MEASURES OF INTEGRATION.....	61

C. PARTICULARITIES AND BARRIERS.....63

    1. Islam.....65

V. DIVERSITY VERSUS HOMOGENEITY: THE RIGHT TO BE  
DIFFERENT.....69

VI. CONCLUSION: THE DILEMMAS OF ATLANTICISM.....74

    A. AN ENIGMATIC FRENCH FUTURE.....79

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....85

DISTRIBUTION LIST.....91



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The challenges facing France today mirror the problems of Europe generally in the post-Cold War, in a word, the political dilemmas of integration and disintegration. In 1993, the promise of a federal Europe pales against the revival of nationalism, racism, separatism and particularism. In France, these increasingly antagonistic nationalist passions have manifested themselves variously as double-digit electoral victories for right-wing extremists, resurgent movements for regional autonomy in Brittany and international trade disputes over domestic subsidies for French farmers and filmmakers. The trend continues. Where did these nationalist impulses originate in the French past? And what do they bode for the French future?

This thesis provides an overview of French nationalism, racism and Atlanticism in the country's past, present and future. It argues that nationalism and racism lie at the root of the French socio-political polemics and that the contemporary problems draw from French history. This explanation places particular emphasis upon the evolution of France as a cohesive nation-state and the subsequent development and definition of the French citizen, as well as the corollary concept of the foreigner.

This study also discusses the repercussions of nationalism as exhibited through xenophobic tendencies and racism throughout French history and into the present. The French integration model further explored, reveals nationalist proclivities that intertwine with the assimilation process of immigrants. In other words, the current French identity crisis concerns internal and external integration, as well as the past, present and future.

U.S. policy-makers must comprehend the rational and non-rational aspects of France's current nationalist problems in their full historical context. The United States fails to understand the nationalist dilemma in France today, even though the paradoxes and tensions of nationalism, racism, citizenship and immigration continue to make themselves felt in American society. This thesis, then, seeks to unknot the issues of French nationalism as a basis for better understanding and more effective policy. The topic is all the more timely in light of the fine-line relationship between nationalism and war, which reverberates in political conflicts in France and, indeed, in all of Europe today.



## I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the interrelationship of French nationalism, racism and Atlanticism in the past, present and future within a general exploration of U.S. security and so-called "ethnic conflict" after 1989. It argues that nationalism and racism underlies French society and offers an explanation of the revived French identity crisis after 1989. This explanation places particular emphasis upon the evolution of France as an integral nation-state, as well as the concomitant development and definition of the French citizen. And, by extension, the French conception of the foreigner.

In particular, this thesis discusses the effects of French nationalism as xenophobia and racism in past and present crises. Especially, this revived xenophobia poses a worrisome threat to shared Atlantic values and stability in Europe.

The French mechanism of immigration merits further study as it reveals nationalist proclivities as they intertwine with the assimilation and integration process of immigrants. Official French policy, in addition to social pressure, has sought to preserve one conception of French national



identity, a community of common history, traditions, values and language. Today, however, French social cohesion "...is now threatened by its failure to integrate third world immigrants."<sup>1</sup> The idea of immigrants as a threat has been heightened by the spread of Islam and France's economic crisis.

The French socialist government in the 1980s effected a move toward more pluralism and multiculturalism and oversaw a shift in policy toward "diversity," the protection of immigrant particularism. Although the Mitterand government heralded diversity as a national example, the French body politic clung to its nationalist self-conception that could include foreigners who adopted the French "way of life." Since 1989, nationalist impulses have reemerged in France and have not diminished in strength.

The implications of France's identity crisis, arising from the tensions of internal and external integration, are of importance for the future of Europe since as a whole the continent witnesses old and new ethnic groups seeking a national, integral identity. The revival of genocide in the

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<sup>1</sup>Alan Riding, "France, Reversing the Course, Fights Immigrants' Refusal to Be French," The New York Times, 5 December 1993.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Balkans suggests that these conflicts can lead even in Europe to the extremes of violence and war. A nationalist wave is spreading and at the time of this work, a clear resolution has yet to follow.

To be sure the French landscape is not torn as the former Yugoslavia and racial unrest has not reached the murderous magnitude of that in Germany still, latent conflict is ever present within France's borders. In official policy and popular opinion, anti-Semitism, anti-immigrant sentiments, xenophobia and racism persist within France. As elsewhere on the Continent, these agitations have roots in the past.

The year 1993 was to trumpet the beginning of a united Europe, free of frontiers. The categories of Frenchman, German or Italian were to disappear with the polyglot concept of federal "European." The Mitterand government gave its full support to united Europe, yet a French referendum on the Maastricht treaty on practical unity received only a 51 percent popular approval. This development evidences the infeasibility of a European Union in the near future, and all because of nationalism. Despite the much-touted strength-in-numbers of a federal Europe, the French proved loathe to turn loose of France as the focus of their allegiance.

Since the 1960s, the increasing presence of Islam in France has exacerbated racist and xenophobic tendencies. Islam is the second most widely practiced faith in France and thanks to the influx of Muslims, Arab immigrants from France's erstwhile Northern African colonies. Everyday scenes of life in France have come to include mosques, prayer rooms, the faithful kneeling in the streets, religious militant union leaders in industrial disputes, mixed marriages and the mixed-race children. The French maintain a historical memory of Arabian dominance in the seventh century that compounds their fear.

Security implications associated with France's identity crisis have internal and external ramifications. First, France is among several nations experiencing an immigration dilemma. Europe as a whole is suffering the strains of massive immigration currents from the former Soviet Union, the East bloc and developing countries. The United States, well, has unresolved immigration concerns. Regarding immigration, Jacob Burckhardt states:

It is against the emigres that the fury rages most fiercely. Those at home immensely overrate, or pretend to overrate, their power. Anyone who has eluded maltreatment and murder is branded as a robber. When princes such as the Grand Duke Cosimo

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<sup>3</sup>Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, "North African Immigration and the French Political Imaginary," in Maxim Silverman, ed., Race, Discourse and Power in France (Brookfield: Gower Publishing Company, 1991): 108.

and Francesco Medici pursued their distant emigres with poison, the whole world was indignant, but if republics imprison or execute such relatives of emigres as have remained at home, it is regarded as a 'political measure.'<sup>4</sup>

The French immigration polemic has produced a domino effect. Immigration affects a nation in several ways: ethnically, demographically, economically and judicially. The specter of change unsettles many quarters of the public, particularly as France's economy struggles with inflation, unemployment and Euro standards.

Second, some nations seem almost predisposed to anti-Semitism, xenophobia and racism, a proclivity that affects internal and external politics. Ironically, the French find themselves in a paradoxical situation in which they simultaneously proclaim the notion of equality, and yet maintain a history of unequal, discriminatory treatment of immigrants. A nation's ability to weave varied cultures into its fabric is of fundamental importance as the 20th century closes on a multicultural note. Those nations that are unsuccessful in recognizing and accommodating distinct cultures will not be able to function socially, politically, and culturally as a nation.

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<sup>4</sup>Jacob Burckhardt, Reflections on History (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1979): 237.



Third, France's role in international and European politics has been consistently shrouded with "French" paranoia. The French insist on their position as a world power and their desire to maintain a French identity. The French identity crisis may further complicate the precarious relations within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, as well as other alliances and agreements that require a French vote.

## II. FRENCH NATIONALISM AND THE CONCEPT OF THE NATION

It is commonly said that in this fertile country, on this territory so well marked out by nature, the emergence of a great people was to be expected. Such a statement confuses result and cause...France is the work of man's intelligence and will.<sup>5</sup>

One concept of a nation refers to the total population, individual or multiple nationalities, which inhabits a common territory and is governed under one rule. Another definition refers to ethnonational groups that do not assert any relations to state borders.<sup>6</sup> "Nationhood" also implies a spiritual sense of unity between the masses and the nation. The spiritual unity, a necessary precondition of nationhood, is described as the "...community of feelings and ideas concerning certain fundamental problems, a certain identity in the way of conceiving the external world, of classifying its objects, of ordering its values, in short a

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<sup>5</sup>Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1981): 3.

<sup>6</sup>Walker Connor, The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984): 9.

certain unity of spiritual orientation, a certain common spirit."<sup>7</sup>

The nation encompasses the unity between mind and feeling, implicit or explicit. "The nation, in the last resort and the most fundamental, is a cultural unit."<sup>8</sup> National self-consciousness links the tangible attributes of language and religion. "The prime requisite is subjective and consists of the self-identification of people with a group--its past, its present, and most important, its destiny."<sup>9</sup>

Ernest Renan described the nation as "...a soul, a spiritual principle...[it is based on] the common possession of a rich legacy of memories from the past and the consent in the present, the desire to live together and the will to continue to develop one's heritage."<sup>11</sup>

The French Revolution of 1789, more than any other event, is evocative of "...a more powerful or influential image than that of a national community coming together to

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<sup>7</sup>Eugen Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976): 95.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Walker Connor, "Self-Determination: The New Phase," World Politics, No. 1 (October 1967): 30.

<sup>11</sup>Theodore Zeldin, France 1848-1945: Intellect and Pride (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980): 13-14.

reshape its destiny."<sup>12</sup> The French Revolution of 1789 was the quintessential act of French nationalism.

The revolution instituted the slogan of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" and the concept of homeland. Yet, most significantly, the French Revolution unleashed a fury which later "...merged into a 'world revolution of the west,' or an 'Atlantic revolution,' introducing an age of liberalism and democracy."<sup>13</sup>

The mere event and the repercussions prompted by the French Revolution have been at the center of ideological, philosophical and political debates since 1789. Some observers have asserted that France's current problems stem from the revolution and its legacy, and "...it follows that to save the nation, the revolution and its mythology in the present must be destroyed."<sup>14</sup>

Other critics, such as Jacob Burckhardt, credited the French Revolution "with having aided such concepts as equality before the law, religious and political equality, freedom of industry, and freedom to transfer

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<sup>12</sup>David Kaiser, Politics and War: European Conflicts from Philip II to Hitler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990): 266.

<sup>13</sup>Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times, op. cit.: 41.

<sup>14</sup>J.S. McClelland, ed., The French Right (From de Maistre to Maurras) (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970): 15.



real estate. But he contended that on balance it was the source of many evils. To him the French Revolution appeared to be basically as unfree as a forest fire: It would spread, destroying values.<sup>15</sup>

Burckhardt continued by stating that the revolution's major evil was its "authorization to perpetual revision."<sup>16</sup> This prophetic insight by Burckhardt illustrates the extent in which the French Revolution would be the subject of interpretation and analysis as the founding event of French nationhood<sup>17</sup>. It similarly exposes the incendiary potential of nationalism.

Alexis de Tocqueville, also an ardent critic who believed that the French Revolution resulted in the strengthening of the state and jeopardized liberty, later wrote in awe of the French Revolution.

A great enterprise was really opening. Its magnitude, its beauty, its risks were now visible. This great sight gripped and enraptured the imagination of the whole French people. In the presence of this immense design there was a moment when thousands of individuals completely forgot their particular interests to dream only of the common achievements. This lasted but for a moment, but that moment was perhaps unexampled in the history of any other people.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Jacob Burckhardt, Reflections on History, op. cit.: 20.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Francois Furet, Interpreting the French Revolution (Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1981).

<sup>18</sup>David Kaiser, Politics and War: European Conflict from Philip II to Hitler, op. cit.: 266-267.

The French Revolution was a distinctive milestone for its time. "Something special, different in degree and perhaps in kind, did happen in France; social and ideological conflict reached a point of greater intensity than in any other part of the Atlantic world, and thus foreshadowed revolutionary changes of the future."<sup>19</sup>

The French Revolution of 1789 and the European revolutions which were subsequently spawned revealed the potency of nationalism. French nationalism subsequently transcended into revanchism, racism, navitism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, anti-Americanism and anti-Islamism. French heads of state, from Napoleon to Charles de Gaulle, literally took on the mantle of French identity, speaking of themselves and of France as one and the same.

19th and 20th century forces have reached a peak. The post-Cold War era is witness to conflicts instigated and waged in the name of nationalism, and ethnic strife appears to have replaced the class conflict that called both sides in the cold war to arms. In order to fully grasp the complexities and malevolence of nationalism, one must examine the genesis of the nation and the requirements of citizenship.

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<sup>19</sup>Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times, op. cit.: 42.

## A. THE NATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Since the French Revolution, "citizenship has traditionally been linked to nationality in France." The entitlement to citizenship directly equated to an individual's judicial rights under the law, as well as an individual's legal recognition by the nation-state. An individual was either regarded as a national, citoyen, and thus entitled and guaranteed full privileges or a non-national, etranger, and was excluded from full or direct political and economic participation within the nation-state. "The rights of citizenship (and, at the same time, the process of exclusion) have, in fact, become systematically institutionalized in the formation of the French nation-state."<sup>21</sup>

The Constitution of Year I of 1793 declared that French citizenship could be achieved by simply accomplishing civic tasks.<sup>22</sup> "Any foreigner was regarded as French if they lived in France for one year, worked, acquired property, married a Frenchwoman, adopted a child or fed and cared for

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 333.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 334.

<sup>22</sup>Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, "Immigration Policy and the Issue of Nationality," Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol.14, No. 3, July 1991, 329.

the elderly."<sup>23</sup> These requirements laid ground for the foundation for *jus de soli*, the law of soil, which made citizenship contingent on the will to assimilate into the French body politic, as opposed to *jus sanguinis*, the law of blood, which posited blood and biology as the basis of citizenship.

As the 19th century progressed, there arose an intention to constrain the exercise of political power, modified the concept and definition of citizenship.<sup>24</sup> The definition of citizenship and the French National Code were revised countless times reflecting calculated elements of inclusion and exclusion.

In the 20th century, the debate over citizenship based on *jus de soli* and *jus de sanguinis* turned into a Europe-wide debate. In 1983, citizenship and the dubious question of entitlement became issues on the forefront of the French immigration debate.

The citizenship debate contradicts the universalist tone of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, which the French proudly trumpet, and illustrates the extent to which this problem is rooted in French society. The current French

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<sup>23</sup>Alain de Benoist, "Citoyennete, nationalite, integration," Elements, Avril 1993, 56.

<sup>24</sup>Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, "Immigration Policy and the Issue of Nationality," op. cit.: 329.

citizenship polemic is not based on racial preferences, but an attempt to deny particular ethnonational groups (i.e., North Africans, specifically Algerian immigrants and their children) legitimate recognition and acceptance as French.

According to Article 44 of the Nationality Code, children born on French soil are automatically entitled to French nationality when they reach the age of 18 years and when they have resided in France for the preceding five years. Many opponents of this arrangement claim that these people are *Français de papier*, only French on paper.<sup>25</sup>

The issue of citizenship with its patterns of legal privilege and exclusion affect most categories of post-1945 immigrants, in addition to immigrants born in France, and are the consequence of earlier state definitions of the boundary and character of the French nation.<sup>26</sup>

"It was this institutionalized process that transformed the hazy distinction between nationals and non-nationals into a clear division between them. The demarcation of two separate identities is, at the same time, the construction of inequalities between them."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 326.

<sup>26</sup>Robert Miles and Jeanne Singer-Kerel, "Introduction", Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol. 14, No. 3, July 1991, 268.

<sup>27</sup>Maxim Silverman, "Citizenship and the Nation-State of France," Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol. 14, No. 3, July 1991, 335.

## B. THE MYTH OF THE NATION

The famous hexagon can itself be seen as a colonial empire shaped over the centuries: a complex of territories conquered, annexed, and integrated in a political and administrative whole, many of them with strongly developed national or regional personalities, some of them with traditions that were specifically un- or anti-French."<sup>28</sup>

France, customarily viewed as a cohesive, homogeneous nation, is a nation-state with multiple divisions. Diverse fragments have split the nation both vertically and horizontally. The French state according to Eugen Weber, in Peasants into Frenchmen, was without a national consciousness until the later 19th century. France as a nation existed only in the eyes of the urban populace of Paris and was virtually an unknown entity to the rural peasant.

To be sure, "...France was one of the first nation-states in Europe, but for long its unity was felt consciously more by its rulers than by its people."<sup>29</sup> The concept of national recognition within France's borders was not far beyond the perimeter of Paris. France, as such, was a myth.

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<sup>28</sup>Eugen Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen, op. cit.: 485.

<sup>29</sup>Theodore Zeldin, France 1848-1945: Intellect and Pride, op. cit.: 4.



Divided into a multitude of ethnonational groups, France did not function as a melded entity, yet as individual nations. A peasant associated and identified ardently with a region (Brittany, Normandy, Limousin, etc.). Regions maintained distinctive languages, cultures and mores. Rural France, by and large, lived in a separate, isolated world of their own.

The myth of the nation was further amplified by historical accounts which revealed that the rural peasant was ignorant of national crises. Many peasants were unaware of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, and if they were conscious of the event, their sympathies were towards the Prussians, not the French. Similarly, many peasants were unaware of significant political and diplomatic agreements or of religious figures; the Franco-Russian Alliance and of Joan of Arc.

The concept of the nation of France was as foreign soil to peasants. Peasants did not possess any sense of allegiance to France. Allegiance was only to the village. Young men were known to perform acts of self-mutilation to avoid national military service and remain in their village. Inter-marriages between villages was deemed an intolerable act. Peasants viewed anything outside of village borders as foreign and alien.

The quest for a conscious national, identity within French borders revealed the extent of France's regionalism and brought to light the segregation that existed between the rural peasant who spoke patois and the urban bourgeois who spoke French. Adolphe Blanqui recounted how "...the urban and rural civilization has always move at a different pace, 'but nowhere is the distance separating them greater than in France.'"<sup>30</sup>

The success of French nationalism, according to Weber, came with the nationwide dissemination of the national myth. Modernization and nationalism were spread to rural France through various mechanisms: extensive transportation (roads, railroads, communications), introduction of a national language (French) and obligatory military service. The transformation from rural to urban, uncivilized to civilized, Patois to French was a difficult undertaking which took generations to take root. Although the acculturation transformation was met with resistance by the peasant, the elites desire to unite France spiritually, culturally and linguistically served to create a nation.

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 10.

### C. AMBIVALENCE OF THE MASSES

Eugen Weber's depiction of the rural French peasant forced out of the isolation of the village and coerced into becoming a French citizen suggests the ambivalent experience of the peasant masses. The peasant was viewed as inferior to the urban bourgeois, either from his inability or unwillingness to speak French, or from his dress, mannerisms and actions. As one bourgeois said: peasants were "'intellectually several centuries behind the enlightened part of the country'...there was 'an enormous distance between them and us...between those who speak the language and those many of our compatriots [who], cruel as it is to say so, can no more stammer in it.'"<sup>31</sup>

The peasant was regarded as uncivilized and the indignation spread by the bourgeois resulted in further segregation. Peasants were many times distrustful of the urban class and decidedly turned inward attempting to solidify the mores and traditions of the village and rejected modernization.

"The peasant had to be integrated into the national society, economy, and culture: the culture of the city and of the City par excellence, Paris."<sup>32</sup> The peasant

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

"...approached change hesitantly and experienced its effects with great ambivalence. But once they had drunk of its fountain, there was no turning back."

"...By the end of the century, the nature of the magic, and the authority on which it was accepted, had profoundly changed. People still took their cultural norms and assumptions from others; but popular and elite cultures has come together again."<sup>33</sup>

Although the peasant was assimilated and completed the acculturation process, a form of ambivalence remained solidly implanted in France. France's involvement in imperialism provided an additional source of ambivalence.

The 19th century was the advent of French imperialism. "...Many Frenchmen had no clear idea of why (or whether) they wanted colonies..."<sup>34</sup>, yet the imperial acquisitions provided France with national prestige and economic benefits.

"The revolution of 1848 brought the most dramatic change in the history of French colonialism."<sup>35</sup> The republicans, of the time, instituted a policy of assimilation. The policy "rested on the assumption that all men are free and

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 496.

<sup>34</sup>Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times, op. cit.: 198.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 199.

equal, and that the overseas possessions ought to be integral, self-governing parts of France."<sup>36</sup> Later in the period prior to World War I, non-economic motivations were reflected in France's policy toward imperial holds. The aspiration was to christianize and "civilize" the indigenous population.<sup>37</sup>

Here again emerges the internal contradiction of French nationalist policy. The indigenous colonial populations were once touted as "equals" but, like the peasant, they required civilizing. Furthermore, the imperialists "...were faced with the problem of reconciling their belief in the superiority of the French race with a willingness to admit conquered peoples into the fold of the nation."<sup>38</sup>

With the advent of the "Glorious Thirties", came immigrants, who were systematically imported and recruited, and afforded most rights, excluding citizenship. Unlike the rural French peasant, the immigrant - like the indigenous colonial population, was a non-national and juridically remained an *etranger*.

The French systematically, consciously or not, instituted a policy of exclusion and fueled by nationalism.

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 299.

<sup>38</sup>Theodore Zeldin, France 1848-1945: Intellect and Pride, op. cit.: 15.

Citizenship and nationality became major sources of exclusion<sup>39</sup> for the immigrant and later evolved into a form of social domination.

#### D. THE CONCEPT OF THE FOREIGNER

"The expansion of the state thus provides the concrete foundations of the modern distinction between the national and the foreigner..."<sup>40</sup> As the state matured, national recognition became conscious and as immigration developed, the segregation between national and non-national became prevalent and outbreaks of anti-Semitism, xenophobia, racism and nativism surfaced.

In the eyes of the French, the foreigner has many faces. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Jew was predominantly regarded as first alien in residence and in the 20th century, the foreigner consists of immigrants and the children they engender.

As foreigners, Jews and immigrants have borne the blunt of integral nationalism.

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<sup>39</sup>Maxim Silverman, "Citizenship and the Nation-State in France," op. cit.: 333.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 336.



## 1. Anti-Semitism

France's strong tradition of anti-Semitism is sewn into the fabric of the nation itself. The spread of anti-Semitism is coincidentally related to the revolt against usury from 1848-52. "...The strong identification of the Jew and the usurer was a significant feature of the nationalist politics of the Third Republic."<sup>41</sup>

Anti-Semitism additionally festered within the debate over the theory of man. J.S. McClelland stated that "using the concept of the Fall of Man, of man as an instinctual savage requiring total leadership and repeated bloodletting, a number of elitist, racist and totalitarian dreamers and publicists have offered an alternative statement of the human condition."<sup>42</sup>

France's anti-Semitism was firmly inserted within the intellectuals and the *Academie Francaise* (French Academy). Renowned philosophers the likes of Gorbineau, de Maistre, Taine, Drumont, Barres and Maurras inoculated the enlightened nation with a serum of racist and anti-Semitic theories and ideologies.

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<sup>41</sup>Eugen Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen, op. cit.: 39.

<sup>42</sup>J.S. McClelland, The French Right (From de Maistre to Maurras), op. cit.: editor's preface.

Le Comte de Gobineau, as described by Hannah Arendt, was a "curious mixture of frustrated nobleman and romantic intellectual who invented racism almost by accident."<sup>43</sup> Gobineau methodically "...identified the fall of his caste with the fall of France, then of Western civilization, and then of the whole mankind."<sup>44</sup> He asserted that the decline and ultimate fall of nations was due to the degeneration of race and the mixture of blood. Thus, a race ideology was pioneered. Gobineau believed that:

one enters neither a family nor a nation through a decision. The blood which one has in one's veins at birth one keeps all one's life. The individual is stifled by his race and is nothing. The race, the nation, is all.<sup>45</sup>

Some philosophers were regarded as "...Jew-baiters, dealing in scandal and the direct lie,"<sup>46</sup> while others utilized the Jew as an ideogram which served "...as a shorthand for certain attitudes and doctrines..." of which they disapproved.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1951): 172.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ernst Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966): 280-281.

<sup>46</sup>J.S. McClelland, The French Right (From de Maistre to Maurras), op. cit.: 30.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

Edouard Drumont, who published a two volume novel entitled La France Juive (Jewish France), believed in a Jewish conspiracy to take over France and Europe. While Maurice Barres, who was regarded as the high priest of nationalism<sup>48</sup>, believed in the notion of "...deracine - the rootless, cosmopolitan metic - and harnessed it to a mystical nationalism."<sup>49</sup>

Commonly, all the staunch preachers of anti-Semitism professed that the Jew was corrupt, rotten, foreign, and most importantly, a threat to France.

As Theodore Zeldin points out:

It was the basis of such respectable authorities, and of all this scientific research, that nationalist movements of the twentieth century built their theories about the need to exclude foreigners from France and to 'keep the French race pure'.<sup>50</sup>

## **2. French Domination**

The concept of French domination finds its roots in the French self-imposed sense of superiority and was augmented by the experience of imperialism. Although France professed a policy of equality and liberty for the realm of conquered peoples, the French never quite adhered to the

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 143.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Theodore Zeldin, France 1845-1945: Intellect and Pride, op. cit.: 13.

concept. Superficially, the policy was promulgated, but in reality, the French believed themselves to be superior.

With the advent of immigration, the French conveniently dominated the migrating masses and were subsequently successful in maintaining their commanding hold.

In 1988, Theodore Zeldin wrote that immigrant workers in France were a new sort of slave. "Immigrants do most of the dirty and worst paid jobs; their children, born in France, do not get much chance of obtaining better kinds of employment; so they form an almost hereditary underprivileged caste."<sup>51</sup> In 1993, not much has changed in regards to the social status and acceptance of immigrants and their children.

Immigrants are regarded as foreigners and non-nationals, and essentially not privy to any benefits and privileges that the nation-state offers its "own" populace. The French legal system has throughout the centuries kept immigrants at arms length. Immigrants were rigorously assimilated and integrated to fit into the French mold, yet they are still not *tout a fait* (completely) French. Immigrants are "defined progressively as a group to be

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<sup>51</sup>Theodore Zeldin, The French (London: Collins Harvill, 1988): 441.

surveyed and controlled rather than as individuals before the law."<sup>52</sup>

France is a country of with an over-abundance of tertiary occupations.<sup>53</sup> Tertiary occupations, such as domestic servants using primitive household equipment, hand labor to clean streets, toilet facility attendants and concierges, are regarded as a great waste of labor.<sup>54</sup> In these occupations is where most immigrant employment is concentrated. The utilization of several immigrant workers to perform the job of one is indicative of France's "...traditional attachment to the lavish use of unskilled labor."<sup>55</sup> The cost to employ these workers is minimal, the jobs are readily filled if vacated by another immigrant and the French employers maintains a position of dominance over the immigrant workers.

A vast majority of immigrants are victims of economic discrimination, and with the continual immigration influx into the country, it is unlikely that their economic deprivation will be ameliorated. Although it is not openly

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<sup>52</sup>Maxim Silverman, "Citizenship and the Nation-State in France," op. cit.: 340.

<sup>53</sup>Arnold M. Rose, Migrants in Europe (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1969): 11.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 13.

endorsed, a predominant feeling is that if an immigrant feels discriminated and overwhelmed by the dominant French, then to remedy the problem, they should return to their country of origin.

French domination will persist as long as the French possess an economic advantage and maintain their cultural and linguistic superiority over the immigrant.

### **3. The French Equation**

In France today, the notion of *immigres* (immigrants) refers implicitly to *les Arabes* (Arab).<sup>56</sup> And, it is the Arab population, which adheres to Islam, that many French believe pose a threat to the French nation-state.

The association made between the words "immigrant" and "Arab" leads to another word amalgamation. Since a majority of immigrants emigrate from North Africa, there is additionally an association with the words "Arab" and "North African."

The two terms, Arab and immigrant, possess such diametric definitions, but are utilized as synonyms. The two words are commonly interchanged as one in the same.

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<sup>56</sup>Robert Miles and Jeanne Singer-Kerel, "Introduction," op. cit.: 272.



This fact is illustrative of France's bias towards Arabs and in particular, Algerians.

Among the Maghrebin population, Algerians are looked upon with a most discerning French eye. Moroccans and Tunisians are more readily tolerated than any Algerian. A logical explanation lies in France's historical and imperial ties with North Africa and specifically Algeria. The imperialistic venture into Algeria, which ultimately ended in a six year war, left the French embittered to such an extent that hateful sentiments remain to this day. Many French maintain that Algerians were responsible for the conflict.

Within France, statistics have revealed that North Africans, consisting of Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians are the most numerous of immigrants. And, with regard to public opinion polls, Arabs are deemed in excess.

Current relations between France and Algeria have been and remain tenuous and stressed, thus amplifying French hostility towards Algerian immigrants. Recent quarrels have pertained to the legal disposition of immigrants denied entrance into France and the status of children born to immigrants. The two nations remain jaded by a past experience and have not diplomatically managed to see eye to eye.

The end result is that many Arabs are overwhelmed by their sense of failure, by their inability to master an alien way of life.<sup>57</sup> The majority occupy low paying jobs and see no means of acceptance.

By and large, Arabs have come to represent and refract the crisis of the French nation-state in the 1980s.<sup>58</sup>

#### **4. The Second Generation**

A racialized concept of nationality excludes from full citizenship not only non-European immigrants but also their children who were born in France, have French nationality and yet are not considered as legitimate French citizens.<sup>59</sup>

The term "Second Generation" is commonly used to describe a generation engendered by immigrants. Confusion arises when this particular generation is regarded as a "second generation" of immigrants. The offspring of immigrants are not migrants, emigrants and seventy-percent of them, born in France, have not inherited a emigrant

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<sup>57</sup>Theodore Zeldin, The French, op. cit.: 452.

<sup>58</sup>Robert Miles and Jeanne Singer-Kerel, "Introduction," op. cit.: 273

<sup>59</sup>Maxim Silverman, "Citizenship and the Nation-State in France," op. cit.: 340.

culture.<sup>60</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, the term "second generation" will be strictly applied to refer to children of immigrants - beurs and beurettes - and children of mixed marriages. The term is applicable in both instances since the offspring equally suffer from a culture gap, stereotyping, a lack of acceptance and belong to the same confused generation.

The term *Beur*, which refers to young Franco-Maghrebis, is the reversal of the word *arab*, when pronounced in verlan - a slang language. *Beurs* or *Beurettes* (the feminine of *Beur*) are no longer spoken of as Maghrebins since they generally speak little to no Arabic and only seldom practice the Islam of their parents.<sup>61</sup> Select *Beurs* have successfully perforated France's elite schools and visible professions. *Beurettes* are shedding their veils of protocol and are adamantly articulating their Frenchness. Arranged marriages, large families, financial dependence, limited education and subservience to males have been exchanged for a modern Western lifestyle. Education is regarded as a *Beurette's* ticket to freedom.<sup>62</sup> 1980

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<sup>60</sup>Dominique Schnapper, La France de l'integration (Editions Gallimard, 1991): 167.

<sup>61</sup>Ronald Koven, "Muslim Immigrants and French Nationalists," Society, May/June 1992, 26.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

statistics revealed that foreign students surpassed French students in higher education by 6 to 13 percent."<sup>63</sup>

Although education has promoted the social status of the Beur, a vast majority sense alienation and rejection by French society and lack the familiarity to return to the Maghreb. Consequently, "many have dropped out of school, some have succumbed to heroin or other drugs, still others have adopted a routine of petty crime to make ends meet."<sup>64</sup> "...Flashes of urban unrest led the Socialist government to identify 400 'highly volatile' areas - 15 of which are in Marseilles - where the combination of high illiteracy, school dropouts, joblessness and concentration of immigrant families makes them ripe for social explosions."<sup>65</sup>

Many districts in question are not considered ghettos, yet representative of "a poor France, where the unemployment rate is close to 20 percent; where the school drop out rate has risen; where the attendance rate in college is the weakest in the area; where incomes as a whole - out of 8000 residents, in which approximately 30 percent

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<sup>63</sup>"Enquete," L'Express, 14 Juin 1991, 48.

<sup>64</sup>William Drozdiak, "The French Ask: Can L.A. Happen Here?," The Washington Post, 12 May 1992.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

are Maghrebin - are low, because this community is poorly qualified."<sup>66</sup>

Young Beurs are commonly stereotyped as delinquents or casseurs. Many teenagers have complained of police harassment wherein they are repeatedly asked to show their identity papers.<sup>67</sup> And in regard to the education system, a discouraging stereotype prevails: "to professors, the Maghrebin can only be a mason."<sup>68</sup>

Although many Beurs have refuted employment similar to that of their parents and desire an ameliorated lifestyle, "...they do nothing to insert themselves into society and do not even attempt to surmount their handicaps."<sup>69</sup> In aggravation of an already precarious situation, the government has been unable to commit large sums of money for educational programs or job promotion. Additionally, affirmative action programs are non-existent in France.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Christian Jelen, "La Face Cachee de 'Ghettos,'" Le Point, 4 Mars 1991, 53.

<sup>67</sup>Steven Greenhouse, "Arab Youths in France: Their Anger Boils Over," The New York Times, 19 October 1990.

<sup>68</sup>Christian Jelen, "La Face Cachee des 'Ghettos,'" op. cit.: 55.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>William Drozdiak, "The French Ask: Can L.A. Happen Here?," op. cit.

Racism against the second generation indicates that French society must deracialize and denationalize itself when in fact symbols and practices of the nation-state are racialized.<sup>71</sup>

Immigrants and their children are a form of diaspora, "that segment of people living outside the homeland."<sup>72</sup> According to Walker Connor, "diasporas are viewed at best as outsiders, strangers within the gates." And, although members of the diaspora may contribute significantly to the environment, "they remain outsiders in the eyes of the indigenes, who reserve the inalienable right to assert their primary and exclusive proprietary claim to the homeland, should they so desire."<sup>73</sup>

The French, in the position of the homeland dwelling people or the indigenous ethnonational group, regard themselves as possessing "...a primal power to determine who shall and who shall not be permitted to reside therein."<sup>74</sup>

Walker Connor's asserts, relative to diasporas people, that:

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<sup>71</sup>Maxim Silverman, "Citizenship and the Nation-State in France," op. cit.: 342.

<sup>72</sup>Walker Connor, "The Impact of Homelands upon Diasporas," in Gabriel Sheffer, ed., Modern Diasporas in International Politics (London: Croom Helm, 1986): 16.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 20.



Members of a diaspora can therefore never be at home in a homeland. They are at best sojourners, remaining at the sufferance of the indigenous people."<sup>5</sup>

This statement appropriately describes the condition of many immigrants and their children in France.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

### III. NATIONALISM, XENOPHOBIA & RACISM IN THE PAST AND PRESENT

Both Frenchmen and France...are notoriously complex, varied, multifaceted, often contradictory and baffling, difficult to imprison within neat definitions.

Luigi Barzini, The Europeans

France, as all nations, possesses traits and distinctive characteristics which are unique to its nation and culture. Yet, France has nourished a fear of foreigners. This xenophobia stems from the Franco-Prussian war and World Wars I & II, as well as the unique French sense of excellence and superiority. On one hand, the nation has a painful history of humiliating defeat and on the other hand, it has felt compelled to fend off foreign influences which threatened to alter French ways, ideas, styles, tastes and language.

France's xenophobic proclivity has tarnished its reputation as a safe haven and asylum for the persecuted masses and has ultimately manifested into a racist lean. The "...French people have made their own distinctive contribution to the evolution of racist ideologies in Europe

and to racist practices within and beyond the boundary of the French nation-state..."<sup>76</sup>

Claims have been made that "historical and contemporary influence of racism in France...is necessarily refracted through the prism of class conflicts."<sup>77</sup> This proclamation further asserts that:

When it is suggested that the Jacobin tradition of universalism is a vehicle for the legitimization of racism by virtue of its apparent requirement that immigrants 'assimilate' to French culture, it should be remembered that the very same ideological tradition has been used historically to subordinate earlier additions to the French working class, additions that originated from rural France rather than from the Maghreb.<sup>78</sup>

World War II illustrated that France was negligent in constraining her xenophobic and racial anxieties as evidenced by episodes of anti-semitism, which were prevalent until 1945 and are currently resurfacing, after a quasi-lethargic period. Xenophobic and racist inclinations are further exhibited in anti-immigration, anti-Maghrebin and anti-American sentiments.

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<sup>76</sup>Robert Miles and Jeanne Singer-Kerel, "Introduction," op. cit.: 272.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

The French "...never hide their amused contempt of foreigners..."<sup>79</sup> or anything foreign. They have successfully braved most attempts of foreign permeation and this resiliency has even spilled over into foreign policy, i.e., NATO.

This antagonism towards foreigners has catapulted France into an identity crisis, with French and foreigner on diametric sides. The French feel invaded; the foreigner rejected and the Second Generation, spawned from immigrants and mixed marriages, "stand ambiguously between Arab and French civilization."<sup>80</sup>

#### A. THE PAST

Je sens se lever un vent mauvais  
(I feel a bad wind rising).

Philippe Petain<sup>81</sup>

France has "...had a terrible tradition of open racism."<sup>82</sup> Elements of the extreme right were in existence in the late 1700's and flourished until 1945. The Dreyfus

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<sup>79</sup>Luigi Barzini, The Europeans (London: Penguin Books, 1983): 120.

<sup>80</sup>Theodore Zeldin, The French, op. cit.: 455.

<sup>81</sup>Edwy Plenel et Alain Rollat, La Republique Menacee: Dix Ans D'Effect Le Pen (Le Monde-Editions, 1992): 356.

<sup>82</sup>Daniel Singer, "The resistible rise of Jean-Marie Le Pen," Ethnic and Racial Studies, Volume 14, Number 3, July 1991, 379.

Affair, World War II and Vichy France were episodes which severely tarnished the nation's reputation. In the aftermath of these shameful experiences, France appeared to recuperate from her racist ailment. But, the truth of the matter was that the demons of the past were swept under the convenient rug of the present.

French racism began in the eighteenth century. But, it was not until the end of the nineteenth century and the Dreyfus affair, that the extreme right fanned out. Anti-Semites, xenophobes, anti-socialists, neomonarchistes, anti-modernists and anticapitalists emerged<sup>83</sup> and maintained one emphatic characteristic, that of nationalism.

"The nationalist defended himself, counterdefinition, as being against the foreign and the foreigner, whether the hereditary enemy of the movement, the alien, or the Protestant. Inevitably, he discovered the Jew as Alien-in-residence, ubiquitous exploiter, corrupter, and debaucher of good citizens."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Michel Winock (ed.), Histoire de l'extreme droite en France (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1993): 9.

<sup>84</sup>Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber (eds.), The European Right (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965): 89.

## 1. *L'Action Francaise*

The most 'radical' attack - 'radical' in that it demands a total revaluation of man's place in society and of the status of different races in the general scheme of power and human dignity - has come from the Right.<sup>85</sup>

The Dreyfus Affair brought the Jewish community into light and subsequently they became targets of the extreme right, in particular of *L'Action francaise* and its leader Charles Maurras. *L'Action francaise* was not the only right wing movement of its kind, but was one which was indicative of right wing ideology and remained active until 1945.

*L'Action francaise* was a nationalist, pro-catholic and monarchic movement. They actively boycotted Jewish establishments, sought to expel Jews from public office and recruited only catholics. The movement sought homogeneity though its uniform recruitment of catholics.<sup>86</sup> The catholic, nationalistic demeanor of the organization positioned one religious component against another.

The rhetoric that reverberated from meetings was violently anti-Semitic. Meetings manifested themselves into rallies against the jewish community. Chants echoed of "death to Jews" and "the Dreyfus Affair has shown us the Jew

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<sup>85</sup>J.S. McClelland, The French Right (From de Maistre to Maurras), op. cit.: editor's preface.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 101.

in all his horror."<sup>27</sup> There was even a radical warrior gang element<sup>28</sup> of *L'Action française*, *Les Camelots du Roi*. The camelots were present at gatherings and were authors of songs such as, *La France bouge* (France moves), which were indicative of *L'Action française*' ideology. Portions of the song are as follows:

The Jew has taken all,  
Enough treason...insolent Jew, shut up,  
Here comes the King, and our race...,  
At your place Jew....

The rhetoric depicts the Jew as a monopolizer of wealth, a trader to the nation and belonging to a different race. Yet most importantly, the Jew is seen as detrimental to the nation and requiring constraint and bridling by the Catholics.

According to Maurras, "...liberty and democracy are 'Jewish'; corrupt finance is 'Jewish'; the rights of man are 'Jewish'; all that tends to break down national difference is 'Jewish'; all that threatens the France of his

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 100.

<sup>28</sup>Eugen Weber, "Fascism, religion and the French Right," TLS, 9 July 1993.



imagination is 'Jewish.'"<sup>89</sup> 'Jewish' meant to Maurras "...rotten, foreign, democratic, libertarian, anti-clerical, anti-militarist, Marxist."<sup>90</sup>

Maurras had a distinct formula that identified what he saw as the four confederate states: the protestant, the jew, manual labor workers and construction workers. These elements were regarded as "foreigners of the interior, who de-stabilized the old regime while re-establishing their revolutionary doctrines and who ultimately seized control after the fall of the old regime."<sup>91</sup> Maurras' classification of states specifically identified non-catholics, protestants and Jews, and immigrants who occupied those jobs labeled as manual and construction workers.

Maurras was one the first to regard a foreigner as a disease to the country. He advocated the "ferocious rejection of any alteration to the French being by anything that was foreign."<sup>92</sup> Maurras claimed that "the barbarians" needed to be repelled.

*L'Action francaise* was a national movement following World War I. The movement profited from France's defeat,

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 30.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 30-31.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 130.

re-ignited revanchisme and promoted an anti-German sentiment throughout the country. It is not surprising nor inconceivable to understand how the movement grew and gained increasing popularity. L'Action française expanded its suspicion of foreigners to include Germans, socialists and communists.

Maurras' held no official position in Vichy and it is said that he met Petain only on four occasions.<sup>33</sup>

"...Maurras claimed to support Petain because it was through him alone that he saw hope for a new France."<sup>34</sup>

Nonetheless, Maurras held the Petain inspired title of *le plus Français de Français* (the most French of Frenchmen).<sup>35</sup>

The movement remained active until its official death in 1945. World War II had a crippling effect on the movement, causing it to split over their perceived role with Vichy and German collaboration. Maurras was charged that he had passed information to the Germans through public denunciations of individuals<sup>36</sup> and sentenced to life imprisonment and national degradation.

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 214.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 35.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 213.

One astonishing fact is that *L'Action française* was never a party. The importance of this assertion is that the movement "...wanted to affect power and influence society, but only indirectly, in the role not of executive but of teacher."<sup>97</sup>

In the end, two absolute facts prevail. "Maurras was *Action Française*" and "in Maurras and Vichy its absurdities met."<sup>98</sup>

## B. THE PRESENT

France is a nation which has suffered from a delusion. The variegated, multinational state, composed of numerous ethnic strains, is ethnically heterogenous. Yet, the nation has maintained a homogeneous vision of itself, known as *Staatsvolk*<sup>99</sup>. This misconception has subsequently and irreversibly spilled over into French society and logic.

Many French, who have been regarded as temperate in nature and hospitable to foreigners, now question the future of the "French" ethnicity and demand an end to immigration. This fear of a tainted or mixed culture lingers in France

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<sup>97</sup>Eugen Weber, Action Française (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965): 528.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 214.

<sup>99</sup>Walker Connor, "Beyond reason: The nature of the ethnonational bond," Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol. 16, No. 3, July 1993, 374-379.

and political forums such as *le Front National* have embraced this anxiety. Yet, not only are right wing organizations receptive to exclusionary practices, but the average Frenchman recently has asserted an active role in racism.

### 1. *Le Front National*

An element of the extreme right, the *Front National* (FN), surfaced in 1972 and has gained popularity in subsequent years. The groups omnipotent leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen preaches with a racist rhetoric, emphasizing the motto of France for the French and the concepts of French identity and French values, has successively awaken French nationalism.

Immigration, as a problem on the political agenda, has become the foundation from which the *Front National* has achieved many political objectives. Immigrants are seen as responsible for the failing economy, mounting unemployment and the pollution of French blood. The *Front National*, typical of most extremist organizations, has utilized France's economic crises to its advantage and certain populations of immigrants are deemed responsible. It is interesting to note that not all immigrants are targeted,

some "...are more suitable than others when seeking to locate immigration as a problem..."<sup>100</sup>

"...The qualitative evaluation originates not in any particular (real or alleged) characteristic of the immigrants, but rather in the characteristics of the situation and, more specifically, in the eyes of those who seek to advance particular political and economic interests by constituting immigration as a problem."<sup>101</sup>

Le Pen's anti-immigrant agenda includes an extensive fifty-point program which advocates French citizenship by birthright; examining all naturalizations since 1974; establishing foreigner quotas in public schools; interdicting the construction of mosques and Koranic schools; terminating the family reunification policy; targeting immigrants in job reductions; reducing social benefits to immigrants and deporting illegal, unemployed and criminal.<sup>102</sup>

The program additionally endorses a proposal to terminate "false tourism" which would require the payment of 100,000 francs to ensure a visitor's departure at the

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<sup>100</sup>Robert Miles and Jeanne Singer-Kerel, "Introduction," op. cit: 273.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

<sup>102</sup>Howard LaFranchi, "French Far Right Gains Ground After Anti-Immigrant Bid," The Christian Science Monitor, 26 November 1991, 4.

conclusion of a sojourn. The *Front National* has stressed that this proposal is not intended to apply to Europeans, 'people sharing a common culture or religion.'<sup>103</sup>

Le Pen's hateful agenda is not solely directed towards immigrants, but also reeks of anti-Semitism. In March 1991, Le Pen was ordered to pay 900,000 francs to nine organizations representing French deportees when he referred to gas chambers as a "point of detail." An additional fine of 10,000 francs was imposed when he insulted a government minister with a Durafour-crematoire remark.<sup>104</sup>

Le Pen's shocking rhetoric is a form of media propaganda. The remarks attract media attention, provoke outrage and ultimately serve to publicize, whether in a good or bad light, Le Pen and the *Front National*. The additional imposition of fines simply provides for more publicity.

The intangible element of the *Front National* regards its membership. The radicals of the past which consisted of a melange of neo-fascists, old monarchists, catholics, former Vichy and cadets of the Secret Army Organization<sup>105</sup> have been replaced by respectable men and women of the

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>"With Prejudice," The Economist, 6 April 1991, 50.

<sup>105</sup>Marianne Amar et Pierre Milza, L'immigration en France au XXe Siecle (Paris: Armand Colin Editeur, 1990): 129.

present. Current FN membership even consists of the previous wave of immigrants, the Spanish and Portuguese.

Electoral support for the *Front National* is not static. Statistics revealed that male manual workers are increasingly voting for the FN and that a proportion of the French electorate is partisan and committed to FN support.<sup>106</sup>

"The fundamental mission of the Front National goes beyond expulsions or issues of citizenship. It consists of the formation of a state with a totalitarian vocation, that imposes its own definition of good and bad in all areas, private lives and mixed societies: 'The personality and deposition of the elite should determine that of the nation.' "<sup>107</sup>

The evolution of Le Pen and the *Front National*, coupled with everything disparaging that they represent, has become a source of imitation. Le Pen is not the sole political figure to become embroiled in derogatory antics. In the March 1983 elections, the issue of immigration entered French politics and became the object of bargaining between rival political leaders.<sup>108</sup> Ultimately, "the debate

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<sup>106</sup>Robert Miles and Jeanne Singer-Kerel, "Introduction," op. cit.: 270.

<sup>107</sup>Marianne Amar et Pierre Milza, L'immigration en France au XXe Siecle, op. cit.: 130.

<sup>108</sup>Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, "Immigration Policy and the Issue of Nationality," op. cit.: 323.



on immigration was transformed into a debate on nationality and came to focus on complex legal texts that were of little interest to public opinion."<sup>99</sup>

Former French President and hopeful future contender, Valery Giscard d'Estaing referred to immigration as an invasion and contended, as Le Pen, that French citizenship should be based on "the concept of strict consanguinity" or *jus sanguinis* versus *jus soli*. This tactic, which the first two measures have been already endorsed by the French parliament, denies automatic citizenship to immigrant children.

Jacques Chirac, former Prime Minister, presidential candidate and current R.P.R. leader, has also alarmingly begun to echo Le Pen rhetoric. In a speech, Chirac referred to immigration as an "overdose" and recounted how French workers are "driven crazy" by the "noise and smells" of immigrant neighbors. He also advocated the dissolution of the family reunification policy and recommended a reduction in social security benefits. Startling enough, as a result of his defamatory speech, Chirac's poll ratings increased over five percent.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 327.

<sup>100</sup>Catherine Pegard, "Les Grands Mots," Le Point, 13 Juillet 1991, 17.

Edith Cresson, Prime Minister in 1991, devised a plan to deport illegal immigrants via special charters. Measures included the expulsion of legal immigrants who employed illegal immigrants and the introduction of fixed date transit visas vice tourist visas to foreigners from countries regarded as posing an immigration threat.

Finally, even French President Mitterand has been entangled in a web of anti-immigrant overtones. In 1989, he was quoted:

A threshold of tolerance was reached in the 1970s when there were already four million one hundred thousand to four million two hundred thousand residency permits [...]. As much as possible, this number must not be surpassed.<sup>111</sup>

"Immigration continues to be a pretext for disagreement and debate between leaders of the main political parties, even if, privately, they think that their respective policies are not so different and that there is a possibility of cross-party agreement (with the exception of the FN)."<sup>112</sup> According to Miriam Feldblum

former divisions between the right and left on immigration issues blurred in the debates on national identity and national community. Despite the emergence of some alternative discourse, most on the left and

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<sup>111</sup>Edwy Plenel et Alain Rollat, La Republique Menacee: Dix Ans D'Effect Le Pen, op. cit.: 352.

<sup>112</sup>Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, "Immigration policy and the Issue of Nationality," op. cit.: 328.

right rejected the arguments to separate nationality from citizenship that proponents of the 'new citizenship' advocated. Rather, they upheld the divisions between the public status of membership in the national community and the private status of religion and culture.<sup>113</sup>

Anti-immigration sentiments and racially incited rhetoric are commonplace in contemporary France. Not only has the extreme right found a favorable voice in a population where economic difficulties, themes of insecurity and unemployment are sensitive, but the vast majority of politicians have served as "...carriers of the infection."<sup>114</sup> A bandwagoning effect has resulted. "The achievement of Le Pen and his often unwitting companions has been to render racism almost respectable."<sup>115</sup>

## **2. Societal Agitations**

French racism is very particular form of racism. It is primarily a silent form of racism, whereby the majority of French essentially tolerate foreigners and little more. Overt thoughts of racism are concealed and hostility and

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<sup>113</sup>Miriam Feldblum, "Paradoxes of ethnic politics: The case of Franco-Maghrebis in France," Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol. 16, No. 1, January 1993, 56.

<sup>114</sup>Daniel Singer, "Le Pen Pals-Blood and Soil," The Nation, 23 December 1991, 815.

<sup>115</sup>Daniel Singer, "The resistible rise of Jean-Marie Le Pen," op. cit.: 379.

aggression subdued. Yet, recent episodes reveal that the silence has been broken and acts of violence, directed toward Maghrebins and the Jewish community have resulted.

Since 1980, there is a trend regarding acts of racism and anti-Semitism, the locality of the incident (region or department), the number of acts and the victims.<sup>116</sup> French men between the ages of 30 and 59 are regarded as the most volatile group and the most common infraction has been verbal abuse.<sup>117</sup>

The regions regarded as the most violent, racist and anti-semitic are Ile de France (greater Paris) and Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur (including Marseille).<sup>118</sup> The rationale behind the violence in the Paris region is that besides being a highly populated area, right wing organizations, nationalists and neo-nazis, as well as skinheads are solidly implanted in the area. Violence in the Cote d'Azur region stems from its proximity to the Mediterranean. Large portions of the Arab immigrants choose to live in the South where the climate and topography are very similar to that of their nation of origin.

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<sup>116</sup>Rapport de la Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'homme, La Lutte Contre Le Racisme et La Xenophobie Paris: La Documentation Francaise, 1993): 15.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., 47-48.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 21.

Violent acts that were purposely directed towards Jews began in the 1980s and were ultimately the result of an international wave of terrorism, as well as specific media events. Paris was the epicenter of Jewish violence in 1982 with the bombing of a synagogue (1a rue Copernic), the assassination of Yacov Barsimentov and machine gun shooting on the rue des Rosiers.<sup>119</sup>

Media coverage has been responsible for increased acts of violence and racism. Large scale media coverage of the Claus Barbie trial and the Carpentras cemetery desecration ironically incited sentiments of anti-Semitism. Additionally, the Gulf War incited anti-Semitism, as well as anti-Maghrebin sentiments.

### **3. Public Opinion Polls**

Since the latter 1960s, public opinion polls regarding immigration have been conducted to reveal the extent of racism in France. In November 1992, the Institut Conseil-Sondages-Analyses Commission conducted a poll which included 1017 people, 18 years of age and older. Questions focused on individual perceptions, the victims, religion,

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<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 29.

the economy and the magnitude of racism in France. A synopsis of the findings is as follows.<sup>120</sup>

Racism was regarded as a distant and less urgent phenomena and ranked fifth among dangers which threaten the world. Hunger, AIDS, pollution and discrimination preceded racism in the rankings.

Maghrebins, nomads (*Gitans* or *Tziganes*) and Beurs were the specific ethnic groups which the French maintained an aversion. This illustrates that Maghebins and Beurs are commonly the victims of racism.

Regarding the number of immigrants, polling data reflected that the majority felt that there were too many Arabs and Muslims living in France and one third felt that there were enough immigrants living in their respective community.

In reference to immigrants seeking safe haven, 35 percent believed that France should cease to welcome political refugees, 37 percent judged that acceptance should be based on political and not economical considerations, and only 24 percent affirmed that France should continue to be an asylum.

The issue of religion and the construction of mosques provided interesting results. 47 percent of the

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<sup>120</sup>Ibid., 55-58.

French who were questioned believed that there were a sufficient number of mosques in France, 22 percent felt that there were too many and 11 percent believed that there were not enough. Additionally, one in two people questioned opposed the construction of a mosque in their quarter, while 14 percent were favorable to mosque construction and 32 percent were indifferent.

Results pertaining to the economy were equally puzzling and responses were contradictory. 59 percent of the French questioned estimated that immigrants should consider themselves at home in France since they contribute to the French economy. Only 27 percent felt that immigrants working in France constituted a positive effect to the economy and 63 percent felt that immigrants overload the economy.

A final result revealed that 56 percent of those interviewed staunchly maintained that they do not feel at home in France anymore.

The poll is indicative of a France which is split on the issue of immigrants and, more precisely, reflective of how the overwhelming majority of French feel about immigration.



#### IV. NATIONALISM AND IMMIGRATION

...Immigration reveals more about French society than about immigration itself. It probes the deepest recesses of the French psyche, residing as it does in the realm of fantasy and representation, in the political imaginary and the social esthetic, and remaining largely over-determined by history.<sup>121</sup>

France has long been regarded as a society of immigration, yet the opposite is more appropriate. During the 18th century, France attracted few foreigners and many French migrated due to religious prosecutions, economic motivations or they sought to colonize unexplored lands, like Quebec or Louisiana.<sup>122</sup>

As a result of many revolutionary wars, specifically the Napoleonic wars, and a low fecundity rate, France suffered from a demographic hemorrhage.<sup>123</sup> Hence, the phenomena known as immigration began at the beginning of the 19th century.

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<sup>121</sup>Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, "North African Immigration and the French Political Imaginary," op. cit.: 98.

<sup>122</sup>L'integration a la Francaise (Paris: Union Generale d'Editions, 1993): 21.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

History illustrates that "large scale immigration, and especially labour migration, has been an important structural feature of the evolution of the French nation-state and French capitalism since the late-19th century."<sup>124</sup>

#### A. THE FRENCH MODEL OF INTEGRATION

The history of immigration to France is closely linked with France's development of a national identity. "France is composed of many ethnonational groups - Celts, Germans, Latins, Normands, Basques, Jews, etc.; but has never permitted them to subsist as an equal. The initial French immigration formula engendered Frenchmen and -women out of the sundry of masses that permeated her frontiers. France, without any pity, crushed, pulverized and digested each and every one of them."<sup>125</sup>

This strategy suffocated all remnants of the immigrants' cultural origin and extensively assimilated them into French society. Immigrants adopted not only the French language and culture, but habits and ideas.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup>Robert Miles and Jeanne Singer-Kerel, "Introduction," op. cit.: 274.

<sup>125</sup>"Le Grand Defi de l'immigration en France," Jeune Afrique, 27 Novembre-3 Decembre 1991, 25.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid.

The only integration model that France has ever known, was that of assimilation.<sup>127</sup> The French nation-state, as shown by Ernest Renan, was a nation based on certain principles. The first and foremost principle was the dissipation of ethnic and cultural diversity and the imposition of a homogeneous national group.<sup>128</sup>

After the French Revolution, other instruments of integration were obligatory military service, as a school of the nation<sup>129</sup>, and education. France always applied the Montaigne principle: It is the rule of rule and the general law of laws, that everyone should observe the rules and laws where they reside or where they were born.<sup>130</sup>

Immigration was essential to the industrial growth of the nation. France actively recruited immigrants and migrant labor. In the mid-19th century, immigrants were of Spanish and Italian descent. By the end of the century, Belgians, Poles, Germans and Portuguese additionally immigrated to France.

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<sup>127</sup>Alain de Benoist, "Pluralisme ou assimilation?," Elements, Avril 1993, 50.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid.

<sup>129</sup>Ronald Koven, "Muslim Immigrants and French Nationalists," op. cit.: 25.

<sup>130</sup>"Le Grand Defi de l'immigration en France," op. cit.: 25.

Incidents of racism and violence began at the end of the nineteenth century. Italians residing in the south were the object of public humiliation and accused of eating bread that belonged to the French.<sup>131</sup> Massacres of Italian immigrants occurred in Marseille 1881, in Aigues-Mortes 1893 and in Lyon 1894.<sup>132</sup>

Although the assimilation process was not without conflict or violence, the similar ethnic makeup of immigrants, coupled with a common Catholicism and European cultivation were contributing factors to successful integration.

North Africans, *Les Maghrebins* (referring to Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians as a collective group) were not initially considered part of the immigrant population since they were categorized as colonial workers between 1916-1918 and were excluded from the census.<sup>133</sup>

World Wars I and II had diametric responses to immigration. World War I generated an important need for labor in France. While World War II sparked a rejection of the foreigner and in particular of foreign labor. In

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<sup>131</sup>L'integration a la Francaise, op. cit.: 188.

<sup>132</sup>Dominique Schnapper, La France de l'integration, op. cit.: 102.

<sup>133</sup>Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, "North African Immigration and the French Political Imaginary," op. cit.: 100.

1935, immigration was officially halted and approximately 20,000 foreign workers were repatriated, some forcibly. The installation of the Vichy government in 1940 instituted a policy of xenophobia and anti-Semitism.<sup>134</sup>

At the end of World War II and the eradication of Vichy, the French Republic officially ended discrimination based on race, origin and religion.<sup>135</sup>

During France's industrial expansion in the early 1970s and a labor shortage, immigrants were again gainfully sought out and employed. Immigrants were employed in "burgeoning industries like automotive manufacturing,"<sup>136</sup> and performed low paying functions which the common Frenchman and -woman felt were beneath them (e.g., street sweeper).

Immigrants were regarded as hardworking and law-abiding and interestingly enough, "they were not predisposed to 'chose France.'"<sup>137</sup> Assimilation of the Maghrebin was inhibited by the vastly different religions, language and eating habits which served as social wedges preventing the Frenchification of the Arab immigrant population.

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<sup>134</sup>L'integration a la Francaise, op. cit.: 193.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid., 194.

<sup>136</sup>Ronald Kovan, "Muslim Immigrants and French Nationalists," op. cit.: 26.

<sup>137</sup>Roger Kaplan, "Through Kofi's Eyes," The Atlantic, Vol. 269, No. 4, April 1992, 38.

The intricacies of French immigration were further complicated by the rationale that the Maghrebins would be sent back to their country of origin when it became necessary, as well as by the Algerian War.

In July of 1974, immigration was once again suspended. With an estimated 3.5 million immigrants in France, the policy was one of suspension of immigration and an attempt to regulate clandestine immigration.<sup>138</sup>

The advent of the 1980s brought "a dual movement towards demarginalization and politicization. Immigration--particularly Algerian and Islamic--became an important pawn, whilst immigrants themselves and their children began to emerge from the shadows to sever the political links with their country of origin."<sup>139</sup> The Maghrebin regarded France as home. The 1990 census revealed that 3,607,590 immigrants resided within French borders, of which 1,412,127 were from the Maghreb.

"...Migrants to France over that past one hundred years have originated from several very distinct geo-spatial, economic and political contexts. Hence, the descriptive category of *immigres* is extremely heterogeneous. Political

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<sup>138</sup>L'integration a la Francaise, op. cit.: 195.

<sup>139</sup>Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, "North African Immigration and the French Political Imaginary," op. cit.: 100.

interests seek to homogenize it, or rather its ideological homogenization is the outcome of political struggle."<sup>140</sup>

### B. MEASURES OF INTEGRATION

In 1991, the *Haut Conseil à l'Integration* (High Council for Integration) reaffirmed the Nationality Commission's interpretation that immigrant groups and ethnic minorities ought to be integrated into society by way of a specifically 'French' model of integration.<sup>141</sup>

As previously discussed, the French model of integration requires the total absorption of an immigrant. Every anti-French aspect of an immigrant is scrupulously altered to fit into the French mold. As Miriam Feldblum points out:

The 'French' model implies an individualist, assimilationist mode of integration into the national political and cultural community. In France, the classic integrationist institutions for immigrants have been the ('republican') public sector school system, the army, and the unions, and not the intermediary organizations articulating immigrant interests. Within this framework, the *immigre* in France is either marginalized under the bias of state immigration policies, where the specific differences of immigrants are externalized, or assimilated and thus ethnically invisible or, at least, silent. The 'ethnic citizen' does not, nor ought to exist.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup>Robert Miles and Jeanne Singer-Kerel, "Introduction," op. cit.: 273.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid., 55.



The most common measure of integration includes the attainment of citizenship by decree or declaration. In 1991 alone, 72,242 individuals acquired French citizenship.<sup>143</sup> The ethnonational group which has the largest representation in obtaining French citizenship is the Maghreb community.

Coupled with the attainment of French citizenship is a prerequisite language requirement. Immigrants must demonstrate an adequate command of the French language. Additionally, there is a process by which immigrants may either translate or modify their first or last name in order to appear more 'French' and to lose any foreign characteristics. In 1991, 10,356 individuals altered their names.<sup>144</sup>

Little appears to have changed since the 18th century, when peasants were forcibly indoctrinated in the French culture and language and "recent trends in French immigration and citizenship politics have reinforced the dominant ideologies and assimilationist model."<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup>Ministere des Affaires Sociales et de L'integration, La Politique de la Nationalite en 1991, Octobre 1992, 4.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 55.

<sup>145</sup>Miriam Feldblum, "Paradoxes of ethnic politics: The case of Franco-Maghrebis in France," op. cit.: 55.

### C. PARTICULARITIES AND BARRIERS

"The defense and insistence on a 'French' model of integration...limits the articulation of ethnic affirmations."<sup>146</sup> More precisely, the French model has consistently neglected to recognize certain cultural particularities. Two controversial issues include, polygamy and the Second Generation's repudiated recognition from France and country of origin of their parents.

Polygamy is regarded as unlawful under French law. Yet, under the jurisdiction of countries such as Algeria and Morocco, polygamy is legal. The problem is further compounded when an Algerian or Moroccan immigrant seeks to reunite his spouses and family under the French reunification program. The family reunification program entitles an immigrant and their family to reside on French soil and benefit from financial subsidies during their stay.

In 1980, a landmark polygamy case in France, the Montacho case, received a unfavorable ruling. The French High court ruled that polygamy was contrary to public order. Additionally, polygamic marriages were not considered part of family reunification and would be regarded as an obstacle

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<sup>146</sup>Ibid., 58.

for an immigrant attempting to acquire residential status in France.<sup>147</sup>

The second issue concerns the non-recognition of children engendered through mixed marriages. On the one hand, they are the object of racial discrimination in France. French citizenship requirements, which are vastly changing in an attempt to dissuade attainment of citizenship, only augment this frustration. Second, the other country, from which a foreign parent emigrated, regards the child as strictly French and similarly rejects them.

The French acculturation process of children from mixed marriages makes virtually impossible the return to their parents country of origin. An example focuses on young Franco-Algerians who return to Algeria to perform their obligatory military service. Algerian officers view them as elements which can not be assimilated since they are unable to speak arabic and they reflect French socialization.<sup>148</sup>

Children of mixed marriages, in particular those with French-Algerian backgrounds, suffer from an identity crisis. They are caught between diametric cultures which essentially

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<sup>147</sup>Haut Conseil a l'integration, Conditions juridiques et culturelles de l'integration, Mars 1992, 30.

<sup>148</sup>Dominique Schnapper, La France de l'integration, op. cit.: 195.

refuse acceptance. This is not an immigration problem, yet a problem with society.

## **1. Islam**

Islam poses a sizable barrier to French integration. There are two predominant arguments pertaining to Islam and its place in France. The first argument insists that Islam should be accepted along with its particularities as any other worshipped faith. To single out Islam as a threat to France and the French integration model indicates a massive generalization regarding muslims and the faith they worship. Proponents of Islam assert that their faith should be permitted free and open practice. To deny such practice is to legally restrict religious freedoms.

Islamic extremists and various acts of terrorism have only served to render the French more anxious. This point leads to the second argument which encompasses the fear of Islam, which has been ignited by Islamic fundamentalists. The images of Islam are ever present in France; mosques, prayer rooms and cloaked women. Compounding this fear is that Islam is the second most practiced faith in France. It is a known fact that Islamic militants, whom are vigilant in their crusade, reside throughout Europe.

A Tunisian immigrant and worshipper of Islam living in France says this:

I am in France to learn the interior of the Western system that oppresses us and to learn the science, technique and tricks. Then, I will be better armed to fight them.<sup>149</sup>

Regarding Maghrebins, he continued:

For ten years, we have been marred by Europe and the imposition of laws, norms, an indigent life, a system of empty thinking and atheism. Look around you at the young Maghrebins. They are lost for Islam...they have been skinned of their soul. It is that, the worst violence that the West could inflict upon the children of Islam.<sup>150</sup>

Another militant was quoted:

We have not infiltrated Europe. Our assignments are to infiltrate Europe and the vast Islamic community. It suffices to look at the number of registered conversions in Paris...to know that as of this moment Islam is awoken and nothing will stop it.<sup>151</sup>

The desire to spread the word of Islam by Islamic militants represents an explosive dilemma. The potential recruitment of disenchanted Maghrebins and Beurs intensifies an already precarious situation. Islam could provide a cult-like atmosphere for identity-seeking youths. The young, who search for an avenue of acceptance could find

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<sup>149</sup>Philippe Aziz, "France-Europe: Le Plan Secret de Islamistes," Le Point, 27 Mai 1991, 16.

<sup>150</sup>Ibid.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid., 17.

sanctuary under Islam and be lured to impose punishment, via terrorist actions, upon the French who have refused to embrace them. Maghrebins and Beurs could serve as the messianic messengers for Islam.

Islamic fundamentalists are not the only elements provoking fear among the French. But, such cultural indicators, as headscarves, have stirred the French. In 1989, the *foulard* incident caused an uproar. "It revived existing controversies, played on French fears of a fundamentalist Islam, and dramatized anew continuing concerns about the future of Muslim immigrant communities in France..."<sup>152</sup>

The incident focused on three young girls who wore headscarves to school and their head-teacher, who demanded the headscarve be removed. Refusing the headteacher's demand, the girls were expelled. The headscarf was viewed essentially as a symbol of Islamic fundamentalism, as an attack on secularity, and as a threat to the French model of integration.<sup>153</sup> Yet latter, the issue was widened to focus on "...the place of Islam in France and the future of

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<sup>152</sup>Miriam Feldblum, "Paradoxes of ethnic politics: The case of Franco-Maghrebis in France," op. cit.: 61.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid., 63.

millions of immigrants who will never return to their countries."<sup>154</sup>

This drama illustrates contemporary French sensitivity in the 1980s toward Islam and the government's insistence to enforce the French model of integration. Although the notion of pluralism reigns in the Mitterand government, the right to cultural diversity is still an awkward and threatening concept for many French to accept.

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<sup>154</sup>Ibid., 65.



## V. DIVERSITY VERSUS HOMOGENEITY: THE RIGHT TO BE DIFFERENT

Since the model of the nation in France has been founded on uniformity and assimilation to a far greater degree than the British or American model, leaving no place for the recognition of minority groups other than as nostalgic remnants of a mythologized past, the claims of 'ethnic' difference in France contain, perhaps a greater challenge to the principles of exclusion than elsewhere.<sup>155</sup>

The immigration policy was utilized as a device to fortify France economically. Immigrants were essentially imported by the French, performed menial jobs regarded as beneath the proud French and then were expected to depart once their service was no longer desired. The "frenchification" process was conducted while the immigrant was employed on French soil. The French model of integration essentially absorbed and assimilated all foreigners. Immigrants were depleted of their "barbaric" norms and mores and were ultimately transformed into civilized, cultured Frenchmen and -women.

Contemporary France, confronted with a generation of converted immigrants and their children, is reluctant to accept their status as French. This generation and their

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<sup>155</sup>Maxim Silverman, "Citizenship and the Nation-State in France," op. cit.: 346.

offspring desire equal status, acceptance and the right to overtly practice their difference. The ensuing result has been that many French feel threatened by the emerging unfamiliar practices that are un-french and they demand protection of the french nation, culture and people.

A prevailing theme suggests that immigrants are reluctant to abandon former mores, while the archaic integration formula remains unyielding and determined to mold immigrants into the French model. Within French society, racism has surfaced as an enigma attempting to ascribe blame for society's woes. "Foreigner equates to guilt...French equates to innocence."<sup>156</sup>

Policies of cultural pluralism, initiated by Socialist governments during the 1980's, are a departure from the traditional French emphasis on assimilation."<sup>157</sup>

The 1980's saw the emergence of Beurs or Franco-Maghrebis movement resulting in pressure forces in French politics. "The movement challenges the French model of integration at several levels: as a form of identity

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<sup>156</sup>Marianne Amar et Pierre Milza, L'immigration en France au XXe Siecle, op. cit.: 84.

<sup>157</sup>Tedd R. Gurr, Minorities at Risk (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1993): 152.

politics, as a generator of political intermediaries, and as a forum for ethnic lobbies."<sup>158</sup>

As a means to promote immigrant rights, organizations such as *SOS Racisme* and *France Plus* were established. Referred to as moral front<sup>159</sup>, *SOS Racisme* is an organization which is active in reducing the level of racial bigotry, "encouraging naturalization and registering people to vote or bring forth anti-discrimination lawsuits."<sup>160</sup>

Originally, *SOS Racisme* advocated a program which was extremist in nature. Subsequently, the organization and its creator, Harlem Desir, have altered their rhetoric and trumpet the slogan *Touche pas a mon pote* (Hands off my friend). The slogan decries the lack of solace felt by many young Maghrebins and Beurs. "...The right to be different, the right of a minority to foster its own language, its own culture, its own methods, its own institutions..."<sup>161</sup> *SOS Racisme* continues to thrive, modifying its agenda to meet

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<sup>158</sup>Miriam Feldblum, "Paradoxes of ethnic politics: The case of Franco-Maghrebis in France, op. cit.: 58.

<sup>159</sup>Robert Kaplan, "Through Kofi's Eyes," op. cit.: 42.

<sup>160</sup>Ibid.

<sup>161</sup>Collette Guillaumin, "'Race and Discourse," in Maxim Silverman, ed., Race, Discourse and Power in France (Brookfield: Gower Publishing Company, 1991): 12.

current racial issues, and consists of 17,000 registered members and 350 chapters nationwide.<sup>162</sup>

*France-Plus*, an integrative association, promotes Maghrebins and Beurs to enroll on electoral lists and to exercise their voting rights<sup>163</sup>, as well as the patronage of candidates for local elections.<sup>164</sup> "*France-Plus* clearly uses the tools of ethnic politics. Yet, it has not challenged the ideological bases of the French model that would render ethnic politics incompatible with the French political process."<sup>165</sup>

Organizations such as *SOS Racisme* and *France-Plus* are not the only sources of pluralism. Indicators of cultural pluralism were further evidenced in 1993 with the revival of the ancient language of provencal. Some viewed the action as a vital step away from exclusion. Yet, others have professed that the revival of minority cultures, such as provencal, will lead to new regionalism.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>162</sup>Ibid.

<sup>163</sup>Maxim Silverman, "Citizenship and the Nation-State in France," op. cit.: 347.

<sup>164</sup>Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, "Immigration policy and the issue of nationality," op. cit.: 331.

<sup>165</sup>Miriam Feldblum, "Paradoxes of ethnic politics: The case of Franco-Maghrebis in France," op. cit.: 60.

<sup>166</sup>Marlise Simons, "Provencal Leading a Revival of Europe's Local Languages," The New York Times, 3 May 1993.

The Socialist government's attempts to recognize cultural diversity are significant, yet the fact of the matter is that "cultural diversity and pluralism are not necessarily the guarantors of equality."<sup>167</sup> France does not cultivate immigrant cultures. Immigrants are free to respect and practice their culture as long as it does not interfere with the French public order.<sup>168</sup>

In a speech President Mitterand recognized the ethno-national diversity of France, when he stated

We are French. Our ancestors are the Gauls, and we are also a little Roman, a little German, a little Jewish, a little Italian, a small bit Spanish, more and more Portuguese. Who knows, maybe Polish, too. And I wonder whether we aren't a bit Arab.<sup>169</sup>

Although the statement served as an acknowledgement of the Arab community's presence in France's ancestry, the fact that many French have difficulty accepting immigrants who are legitimately French, by birth right or naturalization, begs the question if nationalist impulses are approaching a disastrous climax.

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<sup>167</sup>Maxim Silverman, "Citizenship and the Nation-state in France," op. cit.: 346.

<sup>168</sup>Dominique Schnapper, La France de l'integration, op. cit.: 182.

<sup>169</sup>Ibid.

## VI. CONCLUSION: THE DILEMMA'S FOR ATLANTICISM

All your strength is in your union,  
All your danger is in discord.

Longfellow, Hiawatha

At this point, some reflection on broader security implications is in order. The Atlantic bond kindled democracy and stability for the European continent since the 1940s. In the post Cold War confusion, new and old nations search for new security structures and durable alliances. In this context, the spread of integral nationalism throughout Europe threatens the durability of Atlanticism. Nationalism portends not only instability, but anarchy for Europe. Congenial alliances turn into warring factions and the once common Atlantic values become singular values. Atlanticism, a viable security policy, needs to be safeguarded by the United States in the wake of reemerging nationalist surges.

The North Atlantic Treaty, signed on 4 April 1949, marked the institutionalization of Atlanticism in the post war world, the bond between the United States and Europe, of which a decisive part is with France. The treaty states the following:

The Parties to this Treaty reaffirm their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments.

They are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.

They seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area.

They are resolved to unite their efforts for collective defense and for the preservation of peace and security.<sup>170</sup>

The treaty signified a declaration of shared democratic values and a pledge from the parties to maintain peace and security within the Atlantic region. Most important, the spirit of the treaty was to "live in peace with all peoples and their governments" and to safeguard freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, based on the principles of democracy and individual liberty.

Over 40 years after the ratification of the North Atlantic treaty, certain observers remark that the treaty has lost its spirit. The environment of peace for "all" peoples and their governments has not been preserved. Additionally, the freedoms, heritage and civilizations of the peoples have been neglected. Since 1989, multi-nationalism and revived nationalism have come to the

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<sup>170</sup>Lawrence S. Kaplan, NATO and the United States: The Enduring Alliance (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988): 219.



forefront of European security issues. The evidence lies in the collapse and ruin of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

Although the Atlantic partners maintain a bond and possess common democratic values, there exists much actual discord. A nationalist epidemic is sweeping Europe, evident in ethnic cleansing and anti-immigration politics. No nation-state is impervious to the havoc of nationalism and the plague of integral nationalism on the old, new pattern is making its way to the Atlantic.

France's past nationalistic episodes, coupled with a current wave of anti-immigrant, anti-American sentiments are relevant to the future of French and Atlantic security and of importance to the United States. First, the French increasingly regard the foreign presence, whether immigrant or American, as a detriment to the French nation-state and identity. Contemporary examples of dissension exists within the framework of GATT and disputes regarding agriculture and film making subsidies.<sup>171</sup>

Thus, one should ask whether immigration builds or destroys a nation? Throughout their history, the French have consistently sought to protect their identity from internal and external threats. Most American's regard this

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<sup>171</sup>Roger Cohen, "U.S.-French Cultural Trade Rift Now Snags a World Agreement," The New York Times, 8 December 1993.

concern as an oddity. Additionally, can the United States maintain an alliance with a nation that embraces a radical different ideal of the nation and citizenship?

Second, since 1945 the Franco-American relationship has consistently been surrounded with friction. "The French pointedly show their dissension with the United States at every opportunity. 'It is almost a French reflex to oppose what the United States wants, without feeling it necessary to propose anything different or better...'"<sup>172</sup>

The French government has disagreed with the United States and rejected most efforts to foster American influence in Europe. NATO has been the site for French and American feuds since the 1940s. The feuds of today revolve around issues of the threatened French identity, Euro-Disney and GATT. Anti-foreigner sentiments in France are the result of nationalism and the spread of nationalism throughout the European community has served to weaken the Atlantic bond.

Essentially, the Franco-American relationship remains one in which each nation has simply recognized the national particularities of the other. Generally, Americans regard the French as pretentious and arrogant, while the French view Americans as uncultured "Yankees." France is a nation

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<sup>172</sup>Luigi Barzini, The Europeans, op. cit.: 134.

"...that wants to be recognized as the dominating power in Europe but refuses to acknowledge the fact that nation-states, even one as glorious and prosperous as France, have shrunk to mediocre dimensions, impotent when alone, no match for the superpowers."<sup>173</sup>

Ironically enough, the current French immigration dilemma mirrors that of the United States. The influx of immigrants from Mexico has caused the United States to review immigration policies and controls. Mexicans are regarded as the foreigner, are responsible for debilitating the economy and many American's desire austere regulations.

With the end of the Cold war, observers suggest that the era of Atlanticism has reached its end and that the twenty-first century marks the age of the Pacific.<sup>174</sup> The end of the cold war and the demise of the Soviet Union were contributing factors which lead to a search for a new nemesis and the diminishing importance of Atlanticism.

By and large, Atlanticism has not reached an end, instead the United States has placed the rapport on the back burner to be monitored, so that it does not spill over.

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<sup>173</sup>Ibid., 154.

<sup>174</sup>Timothy Egan, "Pacific Chiefs to Meet Where 2 Worlds Mix," The New York Times, 15 November 1993.

## A. AN ENIGMATIC FRENCH FUTURE

France is the most brilliant and dangerous nation in Europe, best suited to become in turn an object of admiration, hatred, pity, terror, but never of indifference.

Alexis de Tocqueville<sup>175</sup>

"Intense struggles have developed in Europe in the 1970s and the 1980s to recapture a lost sense of national identity. More often than not, these struggles are tinged with racist discourse."<sup>176</sup> The epicenter of a nation's identity crisis is found within the confines of party politics, the judicial arena and from within society proper.<sup>177</sup>

In contemporary France, the Front National is a harbinger of future integral nationalist politics. Fueled by high unemployment and rampant immigration, this xenophobic movement prospers and sets an example for the rest of Europe; Great Britain, Belgium, Germany. Yet, the French identity crisis coupled with intense nationalist surges is not a new phenomena nor strictly restricted to the French.

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<sup>175</sup>Ibid.

<sup>176</sup>James F. Hollifield, Immigrants, Markets, and States (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992): 171.

<sup>177</sup>Ibid.

Since 1789, the process of nationalism suggests why French identity is sacred and prized. Throughout French history, philosophers, academics, politicians and the population have believed that their identity was threatened. The foreign threat, whether through invasion, immigration or mixed blood, became and is a paranoia specific to the French.

The French nation-state, instinctively throughout its evolution, sought a homogenous French identity. The threat was not solely from the foreign exterior, but was internal as well. France, according to Luigi Barzini, was

...molded down the centuries by antagonisms and tensions between tribes, clans, cliques, classes, coteries, guilds, camarillas, sects, parties, factions within the parties; regions - Occitanie, Brittany, and now Corsica - against the centralized state; the Midi against the North; the provinces against Paris, and in Paris, the Right Bank against the Left Bank, the center against la banlieue, the poor against the Two Hundred Families.<sup>178</sup>

French national identity is ultimately the creation of the 19th century Paris bourgeoisie, and elite who brought France together culturally, linguistically and spiritually. French peasants were stripped of their regional influences and inculcated with the urban culture of Paris.

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<sup>178</sup>Ibid., 138.

In order to be recognized as a legitimate French citizen, one must speak French, "act French," simply be French in all dimensions. The mandatory transformation commenced in the 19th century with the peasant who was molded into a Frenchman and later with the advent of immigration, the immigrant was converted in turn.

The external foreign threat, explored throughout this thesis, took on numerous forms from the Jew to the immigrant and the subsequent nationalistic outbursts blemished the French past. The contemporary foreigner in France is the Arab immigrant. Yet, mixed into the category of immigrants are legitimate French citizens, those engendered through mixed marriages or born on French soil. Many French, who have an immigrant ancestry themselves, dismiss this generation and regard them as foreign.

Open intolerance has not always been the guiding policy. France for generations "...received the political outcasts of repressive Continental regimes, and Paris...was...for emigres a political Mecca where their revolutionary faith could be kept alight."<sup>179</sup> The same can not be said in 1993. The once wide open doors have now been sealed shut.

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<sup>179</sup>Michael R. Marrus, The Unwanted (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985): 145.

As J. Barou states:

There is therefore a paradox in the policies of the French state with regard to minority groups, who are both invited to merge into the national fabric by renouncing their attachment to origins, yet who are also the object of particularist designations with which they are subsequently reproached.<sup>180</sup>

France, in addition to other European nations, is confronted with a serious immigration dilemma which requires a viable solution. Europe of the 21st century faces new risks: "ethnic, fundamental, nationalist conflicts, unequal distribution of wealth and migration requiring new policies and new forms of co-operation."<sup>181</sup>

A major problem in Europe is the urban concentration of immigrants which sparks the resentment of the native population...<sup>182</sup> "...The presence of foreigners draws out nationalist passions and racial hatred."<sup>183</sup> French nationalists regard immigrants as responsible for high unemployment, overburdened government services and increased crime and drug trafficking. Although the vast majority of

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<sup>180</sup>Maxim Silverman, Deconstructing the Nation (London: Routledge, 1992): 103.

<sup>181</sup>Alasdair Stewart, "Migrants, Minorities and Security in Europe," in Conflict Studies 252 (London: The Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, June 1992): 23.

<sup>182</sup>Ibid., 24.

<sup>183</sup>James F. Hollifield, Immigrants, Markets and States, op. cit.: preface.



immigrants perform jobs which are regarded as beneath the native population or too low paying, they are the predominate target for what ails a nation.

In 1993, Europe was to become a union. Instead, each nation state wants to resist its change into a multicultural frontier-free "melting-pot" community.<sup>184</sup> Events inspired in the name of nationalism serve as grim remainders of it's fury. These current examples of rampant nationalism have provided democracies with a harsh reality check.

Tony Judt articulates with precision the French dilemma:

History has made the choice on France's behalf - it simply is a multicultural society, and the real choice it faces is this: either to find a way to understand this domestic variety as French and to incorporate it as such into the nation; or else morbidly to await the foreseeable outcome of its failure to do so.<sup>185</sup>

He additionally asserts that

If they cannot find some way to adapt republican values to the needs of different sorts of residents, people who fit none of the old categories and are none the less citizens of France, the French may discover that they have overcome their centuries-long exceptionalism and brought together the two strands of their bifurcated "roman national," only to slip with no more grace than their less fortunate neighbours into a common European nightmare.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>184</sup>Alasdair Stewart, "Migrants, Minorities and Security in Europe," op. cit.: 25.

<sup>185</sup>Tony Judt, "Chauvin and his heirs," TLS, 9 July 1993, 12.

<sup>186</sup>Ibid.

The current wave of French nationalism serves to remind us that no nation is devoid of nationalist tendencies, yet some nations are more apt than others to fall prey to it. Multiculturalism is not the absolute solution to the current French polemic. A resolution is only apparent from within. First, the French past illustrates a nationalist trend from 1789 to the present. The French must counter impulses that would repeat history. Second, the new ethnically mixed generation of French citizens, represented in the second generation and Beurs, must gain political and popular strength. Until that time, they will not be regarded as French, but as the enemy from within, essentially an adversary. Jacob Burckhardt's commentary applies:

The extermination of the adversary then appears to the demented eye the only salvation. Nor shall sons and heirs remain behind: "the venom dies with the serpent."<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>187</sup>Jacob Burckhardt, Reflections on History, op. cit.: 236.

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